

**LEGAL
REQUIREMENTS**

45 CFR 302.35
45 CFR 303.3
45 CFR 303.15
45 CFR 303.70

The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement operates the Federal Parent Locator Service (PLS) as authorized by Sections 453 and 463 of the Social Security Act. The Federal PLS obtains location information from U.S. departments and agencies and State Employment Security Agencies.

Federal location information is available to assist states in locating absent parents in IV-D cases for purposes of establishing paternity and/or securing child or child/ spousal support. Information is also available to locate parents and children for purposes of enforcing laws prohibiting parental kidnapping or making or enforcing child custody determinations.

**DEPARTMENTAL
POLICY**

The State PLS utilizes the Federal PLS as a location resource in conducting standard and SSN searches in IV-D cases and in child custody and parental kidnapping cases. The Federal PLS provides the state with access to records of the Department of Defense, Internal Revenue Service, National Personnel Records Center, Selective Service System, Social Security and Veterans Administrations and State Employment Security Agencies (SESA) nationwide.

Each **federal** agency queried provides the Federal PLS a separate response. The Federal PLS compiles those responses and reports the results to the State PLS. In turn, the State PLS provides responses to the agency initiating the search request. Results of Federal agency searches are generally reported to requestors within 6-7 weeks of receipt of a standard search request by the State PLS. Response times for SSN searches vary based on the Federal agency conducting the search.

Descriptions of the type of information available from Federal PLS resources, the source of that information and age of the records are provided below. Facsimiles and descriptions of Federal PLS search reports are provided in the exhibits at the end of this item.

**Department Of
Defense**

The Department of Defense (DOD) provides addresses for persons on active duty with or retired from a uniformed service or who are active reservists. The uniformed services are the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The DOD obtains information from DOD finance centers which update records of quarterly. The DOD also provides information about current and former military and civilian

employees of the DOD obtained from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Executive Office of the President (EXOP).

The DOD reports the duty station or military unit address for persons on active duty and for active reservists. For retired individuals, the address returned is the address used by Finance Centers to mail benefit checks and correspondence. DOD may also report member status, paygrades and salary and dates of birth or death.

Internal Revenue Service

The Federal PLS obtains two types of information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS): addresses and social security numbers (SSN). Information is obtained from federal income tax returns filed with the IRS in the past three years. Tax returns are generally filed with the IRS between January and April 15. The majority of tax returns are processed and IRS address records updated by July. IRS maintains both a master file of primary tax filers and a cross reference file of secondary tax filers. Those files contain information on over 100 million individuals. The Federal PLS forwards a tape to IRS weekly for matching against the federal income tax return master file.

Taxpayer Address

When the absent parents social security number is known and a match occurs, the address on the most recent tax return filed by the absent parent is reported to the Federal PLS. The address supplied by IRS may or may not be the residence of the individual since an individual may use any address on a tax return. The year of the tax return from which an address is obtained is included on the Federal PLS report to assist support agencies in determining the age of the address.

SSN Record

Because IRS maintains files on both primary and secondary tax filers, it is possible to obtain an absent parent's SSN if he/she filed a joint tax return with the custodial parent. IRS must be provided with the custodial parent's name and SSN. The absent parent's SSN is provided when the absent and custodial parents filed a joint return in the past three years and no subsequent return was filed with another spouse. The address on the return is also reported and the case automatically referred to other federal agencies for address searches.

National Personnel Records Center

The National Personnel Record Center (NPRC) maintains files on individuals who are currently working or who had worked for the Federal Government. NPRC files contain records for employees working for the Executive and Legislative branches of the Federal government and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

Information is not maintained in the NPRC files for the White House, Congress, Federal Reserve, Tennessee Valley Authority, Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency. However, those exceptions represent only nine percent of the Federal work force.

The NPRC reports the employee's personnel office address based on data provided by the Federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the U.S. Postal Service. The address is six or more months old. The NPRC also indicates whether the individual is a current or separated employee.

Selective Service System

The Selective Service System (SSS) maintains records of the names and addresses of individuals who have registered under the Military Selective Service Act. The files contain addresses of males born after 1959. Records are updated as new data is received. The date of the registration is included on the Federal PLS report to assist support agencies in determining the age of the address.

Social Security Administration

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides three types of information to the Federal PLS: employer addresses, applicant/beneficiary addresses, and social security numbers.

Employer Address

SSA's files contain employer addresses for over 200 million individuals. Employer addresses are obtained from W-2 forms filed by employers with the SSA. In January, employers must provide SSA with a W-2 for each employee who paid FICA the previous year. Information from W-2's is posted to SSA files throughout the year with the majority of files updated by October. Therefore, employer addresses are between 8-12 months old.

Matches for employer addresses are made based on the absent parent's SSN. When a match occurs, SSA reports the employer's name and address from the most recent W-2 on file. If the absent parent was employed at several places, SSA reports multiple employers. In addition, SSA reports the year for which the W-2 was filed and a numeric code identifying the division if the absent parent's employer is a major corporation.

Benefit Address

SSA maintains files which contain the home addresses of 36 million recipients of social security benefits. SSA provides the Federal PLS with addresses used for mailing of checks and may report dates and amounts of monthly benefits. Matches for benefit addresses are based on SSN's.

SSN Record

SSA also maintains records of applications for SSN's. From those records, it is possible to obtain an absent parent's SSN when that number is not known. SSN's are located based on the absent parent's name, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name and father's name.

When SSA identifies a SSN, a search of SSA employer and benefit addresses is completed. All other federal agencies are automatically contacted to obtain location information.

**State Employment
Security Agencies**

State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) obtain quarterly wage reports from employers in their state and maintain records of unemployment compensation claims and benefits payments for their state. The Federal PLS obtains those wage reporting and unemployment compensation records from SESAs for each quarter. SESA records for a quarter are matched against Federal PLS search requests on a monthly basis.

Records are matched based on SSNs. When a match occurs with a wage reporting record, the Federal PLS reports the name and address of the employer, the amount of wages earned by the employee for the quarter, and the quarter and year for which the wage report was filed. When an unemployment compensation record is located for the absent parent, the Federal PLS reports the address used for mailing of the benefit check.

**Veterans
Administration**

The Veterans Administration provides information on absent parents who are receiving compensation, pension, or educational benefits. In addition to addresses, the VA provides information on:

- Type, amount, date of Award
- Date of death if applicable
- A message(s) to determine if the absent parent is or was incarcerated, is eligible for or receiving retirement pay, or is in the active reserves.